

Chapter 896 Girls Only

Adah barely had time to process what was happening before Elliana seized her wrist and started pulling her along. "Elliana, wait! Where are we going?" she asked, equal parts baffled and amused. Moments ago, they'd been chatting casually. Now, she was being marched across the banquet hall at near-running speed.

Elliana didn't slow down. She steered Adah straight toward a parked car and flashed a grin. "To Regal Grove—girls only. We've got some serious catching up to do!"

A laugh slipped out of Adah despite herself. "I know I've been busy lately, guilty as charged. But tonight? My mom just got back, and I should really be home with her."

"Please. Your parents are busy reenacting their epic love story. You'd just be awkwardly hovering in the background." Elliana shot Adah a teasing look. "Honestly, you're the bonus content, not the main plot. Try to keep up."

Adah burst out laughing, shaking her head. "Even so, I literally got engaged tonight. Doesn't that earn my fiancé at least a few hours of my time?"

"That's exactly why you're coming with me," Elliana said, unimpressed. "We need to make him sweat a little. Men value things they don't get handed immediately."

It clicked for Adah then. This was a strategy; Elliana was running interference, training Allan by proxy. After all, the ring was barely on her finger. Being alone with him tonight might send everything racing ahead faster than she was ready for. She trusted Allan. She trusted herself. Their feelings were real and overwhelming, but that didn't mean she had

to leap every boundary at once.

Adah exhaled, the decision settling in her chest. "Alright," she said at last, opening the passenger door. "You win." She climbed in, buckling up as Elliana's smile turned victorious.

Elliana swung into the driver's seat and hit the gas, the car shooting out of the driveway before anyone had the chance to protest.

Allan jogged after them on instinct and then stopped short, reduced to watching red taillights disappear into the distance. He turned slowly toward Cole, shoulders slumping. "What just happened? It's my engagement night, and my fiancée just got whisked away by your wife. That's not normal, right?"

Cole laughed under his breath and shrugged. "They've clearly joined forces. You're about to be put through trials and tribulations. Brace yourself."

Allan let out a long sigh, tipping his head back to stare at the sky as if seeking patience from the universe. When he looked back at Cole, the decision was already made. "I'm staying at your place tonight."

Regal Grove had more guest rooms than occupants, so there was no real reason to argue. Cole simply got into his car, and the two of them headed back to the estate.

They'd barely stepped inside when Paulina rushed over, delivering the message with unmistakable cheer. "Elliana said she and Adah are having a slumber party. Talking all night. No interruptions and absolutely no visitors."

Cole clutched his chest in exaggerated displeasure and shot Allan a wounded look. "Great. Because of your engagement, I'm sleeping alone tonight."

Allan could only spread his hands. Elliana and Adah were unbelievable.

One abandoning her husband, the other ditching her newly minted fiancé, all so they could hole up together like schoolgirls. Honestly, if Cole and Elliana didn't already have kids, he might've suspected a hostile takeover.

Shaking his head, Allan suddenly smirked as an idea occurred to him. He leaned closer to Cole. "Well... if you're alone anyway, want to share a room with me?"

Cole reacted as if personally offended by the laws of nature. He recoiled a full step back and immediately barked at Paulina, "Put him in a guest room, one as far away from mine as humanly possible!"

With that, he stormed off and slammed his room door shut.

Paulina pressed a hand over her mouth, barely containing her laughter, as she guided Allan toward the guest wing.

Regal Grove settled into an unusual hush that night.

Elliana and Adah lay tucked beneath the covers, whispering and laughing until exhaustion finally claimed them.

Somewhere else in the estate, Cole and Allan faced a far less cozy fate, each in bed alone, staring at separate ceilings.

Morning shattered the calm.

A piercing ringtone cut through Elliana's sleep, yanking her back to consciousness. Still foggy, she groped for her phone and answered without even sitting up. "Hello?"

"Elliana!" Hailee's voice burst through the line.

Elliana jolted upright, every trace of drowsiness gone. "Hailee? What's happening?"

The reply came broken and shaking, words soaked in panic and tears.

Whatever had happened, it was bad.

Beside Elliana, Adah stirred. Hearing Hailee's fractured voice through

the speaker, she went instantly still, her body tensing as she listened.

"I don't know what to do," Hailee sobbed. "Please, can I come to you?"

"Yes. Absolutely," Elliana said, already throwing back the covers. "Where are you right now? I'll have someone pick you up immediately."

There was a brief hesitation. "I... I'm already at the gates. Regal Grove."

Elliana didn't wait another second. Phone still in hand, she was out of bed and moving, pajamas and all, sprinting straight for the door. Hailee wasn't just a friend—she was family in everything but blood. If Hailee was in distress, she wasn't staying put.

Adah paused only long enough to process the words before leaping up and racing after Elliana.

Footsteps thundered through the corridors, echoing loudly enough to rouse the rest of the house. Cole and Allan bolted awake, instinctively heading for their doors. They stepped into the hall at nearly the same time, just in time to see Elliana and Adah flying down the stairs in quick succession.

"What's going on?" Allan called out.

Cole frowned. "No idea."

Allan took off after them, but Cole grabbed his arm. "Get dressed first. You are not running around my house in pajamas in front of my wife."

Allan glanced down and then snapped back, "Then you'd better not show up half-dressed in front of my fiancée either."

They stared at each other, equally displeased, before simultaneously retreating into their rooms.

Exactly two minutes later, both doors opened again. This time, neither man was wearing sleepwear. Each emerged impeccably dressed in a tailored suit, looking as though they were headed to a board meeting rather than a household emergency. ○

